

Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant programs; reauthorizes HRSA grants to strengthen rural community health; expands telehealth capabilities; grants liability protections to doctors who provide volunteer medical services; and establishes a Ready Reserve Corps to ensure there are enough trained doctors and nurses to respond to COVID-19 throughout our country.

To protect our students and schools, this package provides \$30.75 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund for states, school districts, and institutions of higher education (IHEs) for COVID-19 costs. \$13.5 billion will ultimately be distributed to local education agencies to use for coronavirus response activities. \$14.25 billion will be used for higher education emergency relief to help defray costs, such as lost revenue, to support social distancing and distance education, and to issue emergency grants to impacted students for food, housing, course materials, tech, and healthcare and childcare.

The package also bolsters programs that America's families depend on by: providing billions for childcare programs such as Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant, strengthening the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through billions in additional funding, providing millions for utility assistance through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and extending the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

In a bid to keep Americans housed during this crisis, the CARES Act institutes a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures for renters and homeowners in federally subsidized housing. The bill also provides \$4 billion in Emergency Solution Grants and \$3 billion in rental assistance to help those most at-risk of homelessness or who have already become homeless. It also provides \$5 billion for the Community Development Block Grant to enable nearly 1,240 states, counties, and cities to rapidly respond to COVID-19 and the economic and housing impacts caused by it.

The investments this bill makes are critical, they are bipartisan, and they are desperately needed.

However, there are areas where the legislation falls short.

The bill fails to help the U.S. Postal Service and its millions of employees—employees who are ensuring medicine and supplies are delivered for those staying at home. In protecting our public Postal Service, the bill fails utterly—providing a \$10 billion line of credit with onerous terms and conditions of accessing said credit set by the Treasury Secretary. There are reports noting the Postal Service may cease operations by June because of lack of funds. The House bill included \$20 billion for the Postal Service in lost revenues due to COVID-19 impacts, forgave their current debt to the Treasury, and opened up a \$15 billion line of credit should they need to access it. I will work with my colleagues to make sure the needs of the Postal Service are addressed in future COVID-19 response packages. We all depend on it now more than ever. We can and must do more to help our Postal Service.

Issuing a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures in federally assisted housing was a great first step, but more must be done to ensure that Americans are able to keep their homes while our current crisis rages on. We must provide relief to renters and homeowners

in the commercial market. I am calling for a national moratorium on mortgage payments, rental payments, eviction filings, and foreclosures. We can and must do more to help Americans stay housed.

The House proposal was far superior in providing relief to the millions of students and student loan borrowers who are being profoundly hurt by the crisis. Democrats proposed paying \$10,000 of every student loan borrower's current balance and would have directed the Treasury to cover monthly payments for private borrowers for the span of the crisis. We can and must do more to help student loan borrowers.

As public health experts recommend drastic social distancing measures, House Democrats took steps to protect the integrity of our elections and the health of the people by fighting for a national, no-excuse, prepaid, vote-by-mail guarantee. This provision was not included in the Senate package. We can and must do more to protect the integrity of our 2020 elections.

To help Americans keep food on the table, House Democrats proposed raising the minimum SNAP benefit from \$18 to \$30 and blocked the Trump administration from implementing harmful guidelines that could kick 3 million people off of SNAP—even while our nation reels from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 outbreak. SNAP works—we already know every \$1 spent generates \$1.70 in economic activity. Sadly, these provisions were not included in the CARES Act. We can and must do more to keep Americans fed.

While I also applaud the extension of numerous crucial healthcare programs in this bill, which were set to expire on May 22, we can't forget that these extensions will delay needed debate and reforms on enormously important issues like prescription drug costs and surprise billing. These issues long plagued our broken healthcare system before COVID-19, and they will continue to do so once we beat this virus. I look forward to finally addressing these long-overdue issues once this crisis is over.

But such is the nature of compromise. In divided government, you don't always get what you fight for. But that does not mean you stop fighting.

This CARES Act, with all its flaws, is triage: keep workers on the job and avoid economic collapse.

Beyond addressing some of these shortcomings I've mentioned, our next step is recovery and rehabilitation—a true stimulus that creates jobs and rebuilds our decaying infrastructure. In the coming days and weeks, I will double down on an infrastructure package that repairs the breach left by years of neglect—that rebuilds failing bridges, restores crumbling highways, and puts people to work on projects with jobs that cannot be exported.

But let me be absolutely clear—we have a long way to go to address what truly ails the United States economy: corporate greed.

COVID-19 is the virus we are battling right now, but our economy has been sick for a very long time.

Corporate greed, Wall Street demands that consistently puts profits over people, nearly 2 trillion dollars in Trump tax cuts that went straight to the top—all of that is symptomatic of a system that for far too long has kept working people down even as the stock market soared.

We need a system that always puts workers and families first—not just during a national emergency and not just when it's politically convenient.

I'll always be ready to roll up my sleeves for that fight.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, a key part of the relief package was the tribal government stabilization fund. This fund would be used by tribal governments to offset the dramatic losses they are facing at this time. This funding would be used to help them continue to do the right thing and keep their employees on the job—paid, and supported—as our nation responds to, and recovers from the pandemic.

Title VI, Sec. 601(c)(7) provides \$8,000,000,000 in relief to tribal governments for losses of revenues and increased expenditures associated with COVID-19. The bill provides:

[T]he amount paid under this section for fiscal year 2020 to a Tribal government shall be the amount the Secretary shall determine, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and Indian Tribes, that is based on increased expenditures of each such Tribal government (or a tribally-owned entity of such Tribal government) relative to aggregate expenditures in fiscal year 2019 by the Tribal government (or tribally-owned entity) and determined in such manner as the Secretary determines appropriate to ensure that all amounts available under subsection (a)(2)(B) for fiscal year 2020 are distributed to Tribal governments.

Tribal governments or tribally-owned entities can demonstrate “increased expenditures” relative to 2019 by listing expenditures associated with the closure or diminished operation of business and government facilities, including payments made to employees or other entities while businesses or government operations are closed or operating in a limited capacity, as well as the difference in revenues transferred to tribal government accounts in 2020 versus the same period in 2019.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN RATCLIFFE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, as the American people do their part to stop the spread of coronavirus, they've made enormous personal sacrifices on behalf of the entire country's health and safety. Over the past few weeks, this deadly pandemic has taken over 1,000 lives in the United States and infected tens of thousands more, with a negative ripple effect plaguing nearly every family and individual to some degree.

During this time, I've heard from business owners in Northeast Texas who are worried